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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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24131	7590	08/08/2006	EXAMINER	
LERNER GREENBERG STEMER LLP			MORRISON, THOMAS A	
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HOLLYWOOD, FL 33022-2480			PAPER NUMBER	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

1. Claims 2-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 2, it is unclear as to the relationship between the mutually parallel suction boxes and the rest of the elements set forth in claim 2. One possible solution would be to amend claim 2 to recite, "which comprises mutually parallel suction boxes connected to said feed table, said suction boxes communicating with said rows of suction openings for supplying suction air to said rows of suction openings, and a common vacuum source communicating with said suction boxes."

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 2-5, as best understood, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 20020109768.

Regarding independent claim 5, Figs. 1-4 show an apparatus for conveying sheets to a sheet processing machine, comprising:

a feed table (including 26) having mutually spaced-apart rows of suction apertures (27) formed therein and ventilation openings (28) formed therein in a region between the suction apertures (27); and

a suction belt (3) disposed to be guided over the feed table (including 26) and having at least two mutually spaced-apart rows of suction openings (25) formed therein, each of the rows of the suction openings (25) aligned with a respective one of the spaced-apart rows of suction apertures (27).

Regarding claim 2, Fig. 1 shows mutually parallel suction boxes (near 13 and near 16) communicating with the rows of suction openings (25) for supplying suction air to the rows of suction openings (25), and a common vacuum source (19) communicating with the suction boxes.

Regarding claim 3, Fig. 3 shows that the feed table includes a covering plate (26) covering the suction boxes (near 13 and near 16) on top, the covering plate (26) forming a guide for the suction belt (3).

Regarding claim 4, Figs. 2-4 show that the covering plate (26) is formed with the rows of suction apertures (27) and with the ventilation openings (28).

3. Claims 2-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,133,543 (Eitel et al.).

Regarding independent claim 5, Figs. 1-4 show an apparatus for conveying sheets to a sheet processing machine, comprising:

a feed table (including 6) having mutually spaced-apart rows of suction apertures (2) formed therein and ventilation openings (61 and 62) formed therein in a region between the suction apertures (2); and

a suction belt (4) disposed to be guided over the feed table (including 6) and having at least two mutually spaced-apart rows of suction openings (7) formed therein, each of the rows of the suction openings (7) aligned with a respective one of the spaced-apart rows of suction apertures (2).

With regard to the mutually spaced-apart rows of suction apertures (2) formed in the table, the examiner first relies upon Fig. 2 of Eitel et al. to show a first row of suction apertures (2) formed by drawing a horizontal line connecting the suction apertures (2) together, which are located near the element labeled "16". Then, the examiner relies upon a second spaced apart row of suction apertures (2) formed by drawing a horizontal line connecting the apertures (2) together, which are located near the element labeled "14". With this scenario, the ventilation openings (61 and 62) are located between the first and second rows of suction apertures, as claimed.

With regard to the mutually spaced-apart rows of suction openings (7), the examiner relies upon Fig. 2 to show a first row of the suction openings (7) formed by drawing a horizontal line connecting the suction openings (7) together, which are located one row below the uppermost row of suction openings in the belt (4) that extends between reference numbers 40 and 36. Then, the examiner relies upon Fig. 2 to show a second spaced apart row of suction openings (7) formed by drawing a horizontal line connecting the suction openings (7) together, which are located directly

below the first row of suction openings. With this scenario, the first row of suction openings (7) is aligned with the row of suction apertures (2) located near the element labeled "14". Also, the second spaced apart row of suction openings (7) can be aligned (i.e., parallel) with the row of suction apertures (2) located near the element labeled "16".

Alternatively, Fig. 2 shows that each suction opening (7) in the first row of suction openings (7) extends vertically through the belt (4), and each suction aperture (2) in the first row of suction apertures (2) extends vertically through the feed table (including 6). Thus, the first row of suction openings (7) is aligned (i.e., parallel in a vertical sense) with the first row of suction apertures (2) located near the element labeled "14". Likewise, the second spaced apart row of suction openings (7) is aligned (i.e., parallel in a vertical sense) with the row of suction apertures (2) located near the element labeled "16".

Regarding claim 2, Fig. 2 shows mutually parallel suction boxes (14 and 13) communicating with the rows of suction openings (7) for supplying suction air to the rows of suction openings (7), and a common vacuum source (17) communicating with the suction boxes.

Regarding claim 3, Fig. 1 shows that the feed table includes a covering plate (6) covering the suction boxes (14 and 13) on top, the covering plate (6) forming a guide for the suction belt (4).

Regarding claim 4, Figs. 1 and 2 show that the covering plate (6) is formed with the rows of suction apertures (2) and with the ventilation openings (61 and 62).

Allowable Subject Matter

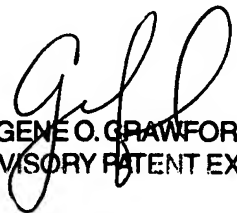
4. Claim 1 is allowed.

Conclusion

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thomas A. Morrison whose telephone number is (571) 272-7221. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8am - 5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Mackey can be reached on (571) 272-6916. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


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